

Grace English Lutheran Church
384 Oak Street, Berlin, WI 54923

*A Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America*

Rebekah Tarras, Pastor

Email: pastortarras@gmail.com

Cellphone: 715-897-5393

Jessica Fritz – Worship and Music Coordinator

Jeremy Fritz – Choir Director

Sandy Peschke – Office Assistant

Penny Bahn – Office Assistant

(920) 361-1820

Web site: www.gracelutheranberlin.org

Email: gracelutheranberlin@gmail.com

THIS NEWSLETTER PREPARED ESPECIALLY FOR

Sunday Worship:

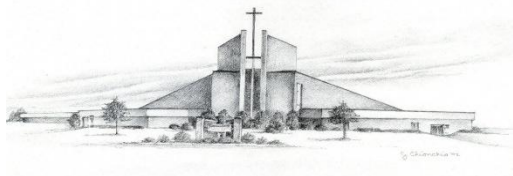
8:30 AM

Office Hours:

Monday - Thursday 9:00 am – 12:00 noon

Hometown Broadcasting: Sunday at 9:45 am

WRPN AM 1600 at 12:00 PM



Worship Services

Facebook: www.facebook.com/gelcberlin

YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLbOerRk5PMk1QWI9qtZ5_g

August 3 - Worship Service at 8:30 am (In person and online)

August 10 - Worship Service at 8:30 am (In person and online)

August 17 - Worship Service at 8:30 am (In person and online)

August 24 - Worship Service at 8:30 am (In person and online)

August 30 - Worship Service at 8:30 am (In person and online)



Grace Lutheran's Mission:

We Gather to Worship, Grow, Care, and Share

“All Are Welcome In This Place”

Letter From the Pastor:

Standing Straight in a Crooked World

This summer and fall, the Revised Common Lectionary readings from the Old Testament are taking us on a wild ride through the voices of the prophets—Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and others. These are not exactly your “feel good” scriptures. The prophets didn’t usually show up to offer inspirational quotes or cozy reassurance. They came with hard truths, holy warnings, and thankfully, deep hope. They came to shake us awake.



The Sunday we gathered for Worship in the Park, the assigned reading would have been from Amos 7, a little-known corner of the Old Testament. In it, God shows the prophet Amos a vision of a plumb line, a tool used by builders to see if a wall is straight. God says, “I will test my people with this plumb line” (Amos 7:8, NLT).

Oof. That’s uncomfortable. Because while it’s one thing to build walls, it’s another thing entirely to make sure they’re actually straight. We can build ministries, habits, traditions, and budgets, but are they aligned with the heart of God? Are they held up by justice, mercy, humility, and love?

God’s plumb line isn’t a measuring stick of popularity or perfection—it’s Jesus. His life, his love, his way of self-giving grace is the standard. And when we hold that plumb line up to our lives and our church, we might find some things need adjusting. The good news? God is not holding that plumb line to condemn us, but to restore us.

As we move through these prophetic readings, I invite you to listen with open ears and soft hearts. Let’s not be afraid of the straight truth when it comes from the mouth of a loving God. Let’s ask together:

- Are we building a faith that reflects Jesus?
- Are we listening to the cries of the hurting, the poor, the left-behind?
- Are we willing to be reshaped if it means we look more like Christ?

The prophets call us to more than comfort; they call us to courage. And the One who calls us by name walks beside us still. Let’s keep building. Let’s keep trusting. Let’s keep aligning our lives with the love and grace of the Carpenter who gave his life for us all.

By faith,
Pastor Rebekah

Fall Schedule for Sunday School and Confirmation



Sunday School will start on September 7, 2025. We are excited to begin the 2025-2026 school year. Sunday School is for youth going into 4K through 6th grade. Watch the mail for your registration form or call the office to sign up for Sunday School by September 1, 2025.

Confirmation Classes will start on September 10, 2025. Confirmation class is held on Wednesday evening. More information to follow.

**Grace English Lutheran Church
Congregation Council Meeting Minutes
June 10, 2025**

Call to Order by Terry Wallace

Roll Call- Attending: Terry Wallace, Linda Reetz, Tim Koch, Bob Prellwitz, Sandy Peschke, Heidi Schramer, Anita Lind, Sue Shemanski, Bonnie Kline and Pastor Rebekah

Terry provided Opening prayer.

Approval of Agenda – Linda added 2 items to the agenda (Outside the Box Outreach Committee Report and FFA request). Sandy added 1 item (approval of membership request). Anita moved to approve the amended Agenda. Bonnie seconded. Motion carried.

Secretary's Report – Terry moved to approve the Minutes of the May meeting as presented. Heidi seconded. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report – Sandy reported that there is nothing new or unusual in the Treasurer's Report. She is gaining confidence in using the new RBC accounts and checkbook. We saved money on the Annual Fire Inspection this year as it cost \$80. We received the last \$1000 donation for the Scholarship Fund so that account has been moved to RBC. Bonnie moved to approve the Treasurer's Report. Second by Bob. Motion carried.

Officer and Standing Committee Reports

- President- Linda handed out a sign-up sheet for tasks needed for Worship in the Park scheduled for 10AM on July 13 and reminded us that we are responsible for providing the pies for the Polka and Pie Service on Aug. 24
- Pastor's Report – Pastor has been on vacation this week and was happy to hear that her newly trained lay member (Amber Rozek) did a really great job leading worship this past Sunday. She was busy in May with graduations, a wedding, funeral and a baptism coming up in June. She has had the same members on the Mutual Ministry Committee for the last four years and is wondering about "changing out" a couple members as 2 have expressed interest in letting other members participate. Today she attended Senior Camp at Pine Lake with 7 members of First. She described a very enjoyable day and is hoping it can be done again next year with some Grace members in attendance.
- Committees –
Fellowship and Caring – Met on June 8. They will be providing Fellowship for our new member Sunday on June 15. Primarily working on Worship in the Park planning and making sure there are sign-ups for Fellowship over the summer. They are also encouraging sending cards and making visits to church members and shut-ins over the summer. Their next meeting is Aug. 17 after church.

Building and Grounds – Bob distributed a written report. The purchase of the new stove was approved by the Congregation and the old stove will be removed June 20. Terry will take to be scrapped. June 23 the gas line will be re-routed and the stoves installed June 25. Scott Schweigert has volunteered to wash the church windows and Deanna Lueptow is looking into the cost of a new faucet for the food prep sink in the kitchen. Continue to watch for ceiling leaks in the sanctuary.

Christian Education- Anita shared that we are pleased to report that we sponsored 3 kids at church camp this summer.

Worship and Music – Heidi reported that Amber Rozek's family did a wonderful job leading worship this past Sunday. The "fill-in" pianist also plays the organ and was in on Monday playing for enjoyment. Heidi says it was beautiful and we may want to ask them to play at least one song on the organ if they are filling in for Jess again. Plans are in place for New Member Sunday, Worship in the Park, a service of hymns in July, First Lutheran's 150th Anniversary and the Polka and Pie Social.

Mission and Outreach – Tim Koch reported that he is going through the material shared with him by Craig C. and has the next four months set up for Missions. He needs to update the bulletin board and was told that the presenter for the Mission each month has been the one to change the Board in the past.

Finance Committee – Terry provided the minutes from the last Finance Committee Meeting and shared that the purchase of the new stoves was approved by the Congregation.

Investment Committee – Written Report provided. A virtual meeting with Steve Abrahamson of RBC in May showed that our combined (total) investments are up 4.24% year-to-date.

Outside the Box Outreach Committee-Heidi presented a written report from their 6/4/25 meeting. They are working on a schedule of disbursements and are still identifying needs in the community, along with other donation and volunteer opportunities.

Unfinished Business

- Data Pro Computer Update -Jason and his partner came a week ago and finished the job. The bill is paid.
- 1st Lutheran Anniversary Sign-up for duties/assistance was sent around by Linda.

New Business

- New Stoves – Bob already reported.
- Approval of Language changes in continuing resolutions – Terry moved to accept the two language changes in the continuing resolutions below. Second by Heidi. Motion carried.
 - 1) C13.10.A25: Add the sentence “**Committee head to be decided among committee members based on expertise and willingness to serve that role**”
 - 2) C13.10.B25: Add in #2.C. **The chairperson of the Investment Committee, as well as the vice president, will be designated as authorized representatives to make trades and disbursements.**
- New Members – Sue moved to accept the request for membership of Christopher Bludau. Second by Heidi. Motion carried.
- FFA Request for businesses to fund support printing shirts was denied as this does not meet our Mission Statement and we are not a business.
- Tim asked re: old heavy-duty signs for church events he found in his storage shed and it was agreed we should keep them in the furnace room for now.

Closing Prayer offered by Pastor Rebekah.

Bonnie moved to adjourn the meeting. Second by Anita. Motion Carried.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Sue Shemanski
Secretary

Linda Reetz – President		920-279-7899	linda.reetz0726@gmail.com
Terry Wallace – Vice President		920-344-1523	tw9696@outlook.com
Sandy Peschke – Treasurer		920-290-1551	kspeschke1950@gmail.com
Sue Shemanski – Secretary		920-361-4506	shemanski5@yahoo.com
Heidi Schramer– Music/Worship		920-361-4097	schrumer@charter.net
Anita Lind – Christian Education		920-290-1374	anita_lind@charter.net
Bonnie Kline – Fellowship/Caring		920-570-2787	razn6mom@yahoo.com
Tim Koch – Mission Outreach		920-789-8358	koch6@charter.net
Bob Prellwitz – Building and Grounds		920-361-0669	bobprellwitz@yahoo.com

First Lutheran Celebrating 150 Years

First Lutheran will be celebrating its 150th anniversary on **Sunday, August 10**. Here's a quick rundown of the day's events:

- 🕒 **9:00–10:00 AM:** Continental Breakfast
- 🎵 **9:30 AM:** Alumni Choir Rehearsal (anyone who sings or has sung in the choir is invited to participate)
- 🏛️ **10:30 AM:** Worship Service
- 🍽️ **12:00 PM:** Catered Lunch (*RSVP required*)
- 🎤 **1:30 PM:** Afternoon Program

We want to support our sister congregation by helping to serve on that day so their members can enjoy the festivities. If you would like to help out, look for the sign-up sheet on the kiosk. All members of Grace are invited to join them for the day.

Worship in the Park, July 13, 2025



Mission of the Month – World Hunger

For 50 years we have joined together as Lutherans to address the root causes of hunger and poverty around the world through ELCA World Hunger. Part of our church's long tradition of meeting human needs, ELCA World Hunger testifies to our hope for and commitment to God's promise of a time when we will hunger and thirst no more.

In 2024 we commemorate the 50th anniversary of this ministry. We have made great strides, but once again we face a startling increase in global hunger. As we reflect on our last 50 years of ministry together, we know God calls us to respond to the needs of the world now more than ever.

As members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), we are called to share in God's work in the world. Through ELCA World Hunger, our church creatively and courageously works toward a just world where all are fed. Together, we act, pray and hope for truly sufficient, sustainable livelihoods for all.

Through God's work and together as a church, we are achieving things on a scale and scope we could never do alone. Please consider a donation to this month's mission – World Hunger.

Lutheran World Relief Kits – June, July & August

As in prior years, the Ladies of Grace will be putting together kits for personal care, school supplies, and baby care. When you are out shopping, whether it be retail stores, garage sales, or flea markets, keep an eye out for the list of items needed. Any item(s) can be dropped off at church, anytime during the summer months.

Thrivent Action Cards can be applied for to purchase items for the kits. If you apply for the cards and want someone to "shop" for you, the ladies of Grace would be happy to do so. Just let the office staff know.

Personal Care

- 1 – light weight bath size towel dark color
20x40 or 27x52
(no larger please)
- 2 or 3 – bath size bars of soap (8 – 9 ounces total in original wrapping)
- 1 – sturdy comb
- 1 – metal nail clipper
- 1 – toothbrush

School Supply Kit

- 4 – 70 sheet notebooks
(wide or college rule)
- 1 – 30 centimeter ruler
(or centimeters on one side inches on the other)
- 1 – pencil sharpener
- 1 – blunt pair of scissors
- 5 – unsharpened #2 pencils
- 5 – black or blue pens (no gel ink)
- 1 – box of 16 – 24 crayons
- 1 – 2 1/2" eraser

Baby Care Kit

- 2 – lightweight cotton t-shirts (no Onesies)
- 2 – short or long sleeve sleepers (without feet)
- 2 – blankets
(between 36 – 52 inches)
- 1 – jacket or sweater (include cap)
- 2 – pairs of socks
- 1 – hand towel (dark color preferred)
- 2 – 3 bars of gentle soap
(8 – 9 ounces total)

June Income		June Expenses	
Weekly Income	9,342.63	Wages and Payroll Expenses	\$17,428.92
RBC Earnings	3,154.00	Building & Grounds /Utilities	1,232.98
Bulletins/Radio Ministry	140.00	Worship Expenses	66.06
Thrivent Choice Dollars	78.00	Radio Ministry	300.00
Shared Ministry	4,121.66	Office/Miscellaneous	461.69
		Postage/Advertising	786.00
		Camp Dues Reimbursement	1,188.05
		Fellowship & Caring	44.28
		Supply Musician	300.00
TOTAL	\$ 16,836.29	TOTAL	\$ 21,807.98
Missions (In/Out)	\$2,135.00	Missions (In/Out)	\$365.00
Good Samaritan Fund	0.00	Good Samaritan	0.00
Soul Food	45.00	Soul Food	0.00
Women of Grace	40.00	Women of Grace	0.00
Men of Grace	115.00	Men of Grace	0.00
Christian Education/Youth	0.00	Christian Education/Youth	0.00
Scholarship Fund	0.00	Scholarship Fund	0.00
Endowment Fund	0.00	Endowment Fund	0.00
Beginning Balance January 2025		Ending Balance June 2025	
Investments:		Investments:	
Leonard Jones Fund	\$ 1,361,456.39		1,448,251.45
Capital Improvement Fund	\$ 321,917.64		333,499.27
Endowment Fund	\$ 123,890.51		128,828.00
Auxiliary Fund (Started in April	\$ 29,841.29		28,552.14
Scholarship Fund (Started In June 2025)		\$	5,903.55



Polka Church Service - August 24, 2025 Followed by a Pie and Ice Social

On Sunday, August 24 we will once again welcome the Albright Polka Band to lead our music at the 8:30 am worship service.

Immediately following worship, the council members will provide pie and ice cream for the fellowship.

All are welcome, please invite family, neighbors, friends, members of the Berlin community to join us!



Welcome Back Church Choir

I am excited to announce that our Church Choir will be starting again on August 20!

Of course, we are welcoming back all of our members that have been with us in the past, but there may be some in our church family who are interested in joining choir that haven't been in a choir since middle or high school. You may miss singing in a group or miss having fellowship time with others who enjoy singing. We are a very flexible group, and you can come and sing when you are available. Rehearsals are Wednesday evenings from 7-8 pm, and we sing two Sundays a month on average.

We would like to invite you to join us for our first rehearsal at 7 pm with time afterward to answer questions and join in fellowship and conversation. If you have any questions, please contact Jeremy Fritz at fritzckkk@gmail.com.



Women of Grace's Annual Salad Supper
Tuesday, August 5th at 6:15 PM
Please bring a salad to share (2 people to a salad)

Plates, silverware, dinner rolls/butter, dessert, and beverages will be provided.

We hope you can join us on Tuesday, August 5th for our annual Women's Salad Supper. Our guest speaker will be Cully from the Damascus Road Project. Damascus Road Project, Inc is a nearly 100% specially trained volunteer run 501c3 non-profit organization.

Cully will share with us the work they are doing to fight sex trafficking and exploitation and how they are helping the abused.

Also, please remember that our Salad Supper is a baby shower for Lutheran World Relief. Please consider bringing an item (baby blanket, sweater, diapers, Ivory Soap, sleepers, socks, etc.) for our LWR Baby Layettes. A list of what is needed can be found in this newsletter.



“Population 485: Meeting Your Neighbors One Siren at a time” by Wisconsin author Michael Perry is the Grace Book Club's Choice for August.

After a decade away from his hometown, Michael Perry decides to return to the place he's always loved: New Auburn, Wisconsin (population 485). He discovers the local vigilante is a farmer's wife armed with a pistol and a Bible, the most senior member of the volunteer fire department is a cross-eyed butcher with one kidney and two ex-wives (both of whom work at the only gas station in town), and the back roads are haunted by the ghosts of children and farmers.

Unable to polka or repair his own pickup, his farm-boy hands gone soft after years of writing, Perry figures the best way to regain his credibility is to join the volunteer fire department. Against a backdrop of fires and tangled wrecks, bar fights and smelt feeds, Population: 485 is a comic and sometimes heartbreaking true tale leavened with quieter meditations on an overlooked America.

We will meet to discuss **“Population 485”** on Tuesday, August 12th at a location to be determined. If you are interested in reading this book, please contact Cindy Wallace for a copy. If you have already read this book, please join us on August 12th for our book discussion. We would love to have you join us.



Bulletins

- August 3 - In Honor of Conrad and Mary Falk's 41st Wedding Anniversary
August 10 - In Honor of Joseph Schmidt's Birthday by his parents
August 17 - In honor of by Jerry and Linda Reetz's Wedding Anniversary
August 24 - Open
August 31 - In Honor of Stan and Sue's Wedding Anniversary

Flowers

- August 3 - In Honor of Conrad and Mary Falk's 41st Wedding Anniversary
August 10 - In Honor of Jerry and Linda Reetz's Wedding Anniversary
August 17 - Open
August 24 - Open
August 31 - Open



Radio Ministry

- August 3 - In Honor of Conrad and Mary Falk's 41st Wedding Anniversary
August 10 - Sponsored by Mary Lou Neubauer
August 17 - In Honor of Jerry and Linda Reetz's Wedding Anniversary
August 24 - In Honor of all teachers by Henry and Lois Stark
August 31 - In Memory of Grandpa Bubba by Sadie and Spencer



Fellowship

- August 3 - Mary Falk
August 10 - Open
August 17 - DeAnna
August 24 - Polka and Pie
August 31 - Open

Greeters

- August 3 - Open
August 10 - Open
August 17 - Mary Lou Neubauer
August 24 - Jean Dretske
August 31 - Open

Men's (from Grace, First and guests) Steak Fry is scheduled for 5:00 pm, Wednesday, August 20th.

The location is changing from last year but has not been finalized yet. The cost will be based on cost of the event but is anticipated to be \$20 each. Sign-up sheet will be going up shortly. We will need final count by August 15th to get the steaks ordered.

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I am looking for a couple of grills to be used for the event. If you have one or two we could use, please contact Terry Wallace, 920-344-1523.



Happy Birthday

August Birthdays

2 Lee Born
 2 Cheryl Heil
 3 Anna Falk
 3 Lisa Lee
 3 Brady Retzlaff
 3 Joseph Schmidt
 4 Samantha Gerth
 4 Tammy Retzlaff
 5 Lincoln O'Brien
 8 Bonnie Schenk
 9 Logan Kline
 10 Timothy Krentz
 10 David Olsen
 11 Gerald Pomplun
 12 Ana Nelson
 14 James Lehr
 15 Kinsley Gerth
 15 Susan Strom
 16 Dan Roggow
 20 William Krebs
 22 Jean Dretske
 24 Caylie Krebs
 25 Austin Haedt
 26 Judith Gallert
 27 Mary Gropp
 29 Diane Timm
 29 Tanner Zabel
 30 Ike Dobbs
 31 Cheryl Chappa
 31 Craig Chovanec
 31 Lois Stark
 31 Callyn Strebelinski



Happy Anniversary

August Anniversaries

4 Conrad & Mary Falk
 4 Tim & Joan Koch - 35th
 8 Jim & Kim Lehr
 12 Jerry & Linda Reetz
 13 Lee & Barb Born
 15 Scott & Tammy Greening
 19 Paul & Candy Gravunder
 19 Rod & Debbie Krause
 21 Gary & Jan Knoke
 21 Patrick & Teresa Murkley
 21 Dennis & Tammy Retzlaff
 22 Jerry & Phyllis Luttrupp – 55th
 25 William & Jan Krebs
 25 David & Bonnie Schenk

If any birthdays or anniversaries were missed please let the office staff know.



WHAT: Blood Drive
WHEN: August 26
WHERE: Grace Church
TIME: 10:30am-5:30pm
 Call 920-361-3679 for an appointment .
 Walk-ins are always welcome too!

Craft Day at Grace

Join us for a fun-filled Craft Day on Saturday, August 9th, from 9:00AM to 4:00 PM!
 Bring your projects, creativity, and enjoy fellowship with fellow crafters.

All skill levels welcome!





2025

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 8:30 am Worship with Communion	4 1:30 pm Bible Study at First Lutheran 4:00 pm Executive Committee Meeting	5 9:00 am Staff Meeting 6:15 pm Women's Salad Supper	6	7	8	9 9:00 am - 4:00 pm Craft Day at Grace Lutheran
10 8:30 am Worship 10:30 am First Lutheran's 150 th Anniversary	11 1:30 pm Bible Study at First Lutheran 7:00 pm Congregation Council Meeting	12 9:00 am Staff Meeting	13	14	15	16
17 8:30 am Worship with communion 6:30 pm Parish Council Meeting at First Lutheran	18 1:30 pm Bible Study at First Lutheran	19 9:00 am Staff Meeting 3:00 pm Finance Committee Meeting	20 5:00 pm Men's Steak Fry 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	21	22	23
24 8:30 am Polka Sunday with communion Pie & Ice Cream in the Fellowship Hall following Worship	25 1:30 pm Bible Study at First Lutheran	26 9:00 am Staff Meeting 10:30 am – 5:50 pm Berlin Community Blood Drive	27 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	28	29	30
31 8:30 am Worship with communion						